

A VISION FOR THE EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE **KLEIN MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM**

910 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut

March 2014

The Klein Memorial Auditorium, a municipally-owned theater facility built in 1940, is a regional venue for musical, dramatic, and educational events, under the management of the Klein Memorial Auditorium Foundation, a 501(c)3 corporation based in Bridgeport.

The Klein is home to two cultural giants of the metropolitan Bridgeport music community: the **Greater Bridgeport Symphony (GBS)** and the **Greater Bridgeport Youth Orchestras (GBYO)**.

The auditorium seats nearly 1500 people, making it one of the prime venues of Fairfield County. However, handicap access remains difficult, despite renovations in 2002. In some important respects, the theater is functionally outdated. Support and administrative functions are almost non-existent.

This proposal addresses handicap access to *all* areas, streamlines functions within the existing building, and adds much-needed office, meeting, and storage space, and improves visibility – and viability – of the building’s public face.

ACCESSIBILITY

Front entrance: Currently there is no direct access for persons with disabilities through the Fairfield Avenue portal. The proposed design rebuilds the entire entrance platform, so that it is level with the main lobby. This is reached by a convenient ramp from designated handicap spaces in the east parking lot. The front steps would be rebuilt to meet the new level; a new, spacious “meet-and-greet” area is created outside the main doors, with opportunities for signage and festive banners to advertise the Klein’s events.

Two new elevators are proposed: a large public elevator off the main lobby will, for the first time, provide access to lower level lounge space and to the mezzanine. A second elevator will serve all four levels of the backstage, providing access to the Trap Room and all dressing room levels.

A discreet platform lift will provide access from the Auditorium floor direct to the stage.

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New accessible Men's and Women's Rooms, larger than existing capacity, will be built on the mezzanine level. Space is also available, in the proposed addition (see below), to build accessible toilet rooms on the lobby level.

ADDITION

A 4950 square foot addition is proposed (first floor 2200 s.f.±; lower level 1500 s.f.±; mezzanine 1250 s.f.±), to house the new public elevator, new stairs, offices, toilet rooms, social spaces, storage, and support functions.

LIFE SAFETY

Currently, staircases to the Lower Level, and two main staircases to the Mezzanine, are not enclosed to protect escaping persons from fire and smoke, and do not exit directly to the exterior. The addition includes a large public stair from the lower level to the mezzanine, with an exit directly to grade, which provides a safe escape route in an emergency. The stair is also designed in keeping with the décor of the existing Art Deco interior, and provides easy, graceful entry to the different public levels.

OFFICE SPACE

The addition provides full-time office space for the Klein, GBS and GBYO, with space for files and equipment. There is a direct outside access for daytime visitors and volunteers, easily visible, and accessible without need to open the entire facility. The office space is linked via a new corridor to the Box Office, Lobby and backstage areas.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THEATER FUNCTIONS

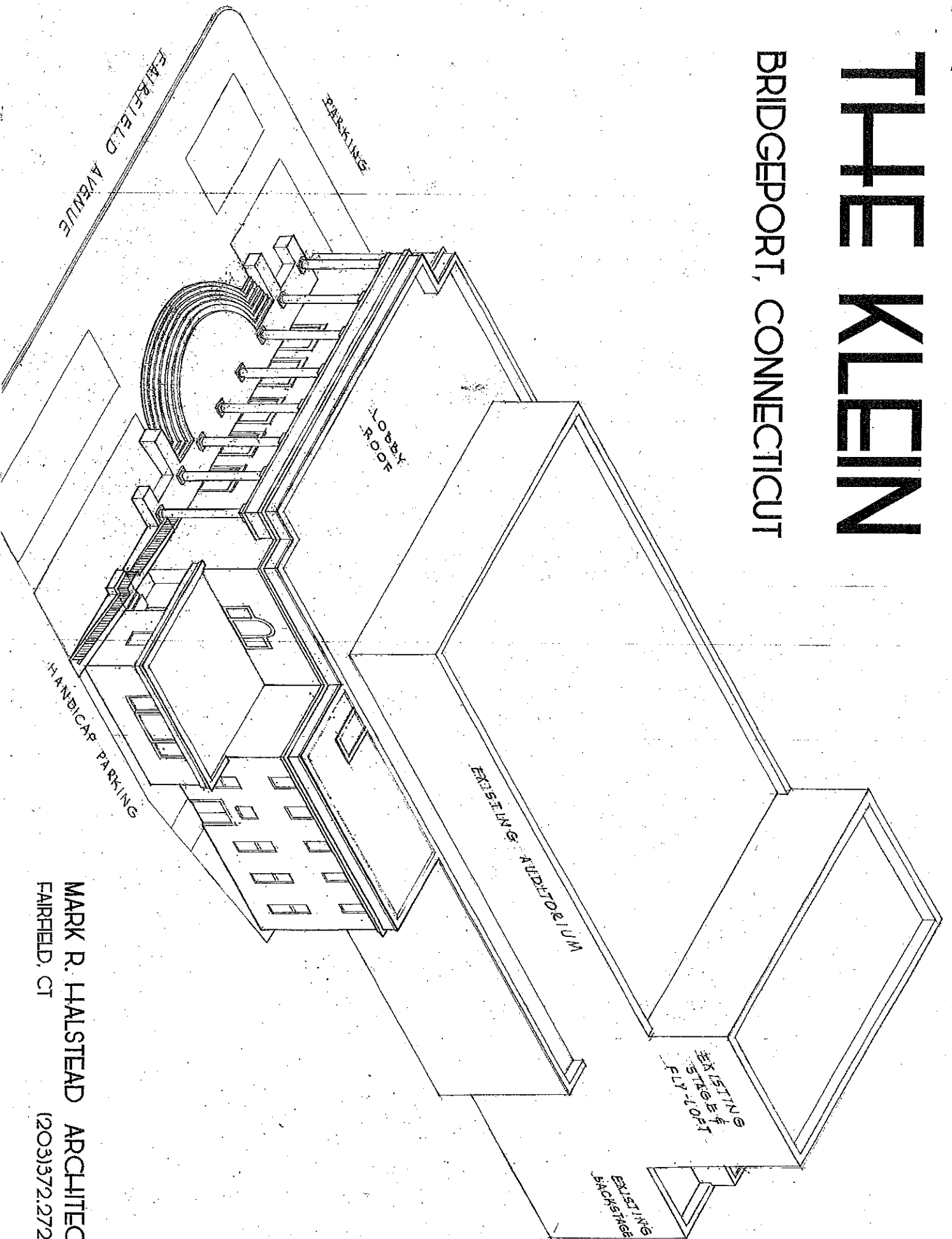
Currently the stage/backstage area cannot be accessed except from the exterior and through the Auditorium. Proposed alterations will create a **connection** between the Lobby and the stage without entering the Auditorium. Large new **storage spaces** are created for large instruments and a **music library**. **Dressing rooms** will be altered to provide new **shower** and **toilet** facilities. Equipment will be relocated to free up stage wing space. A **hydraulic lift** is proposed to double the thrust stage as an **orchestra pit**.

LOUNGE/CONFERENCE SPACES

The addition contains space suitable on both main levels for receptions and conferences, expanding the use of the building.

THE KLEIN

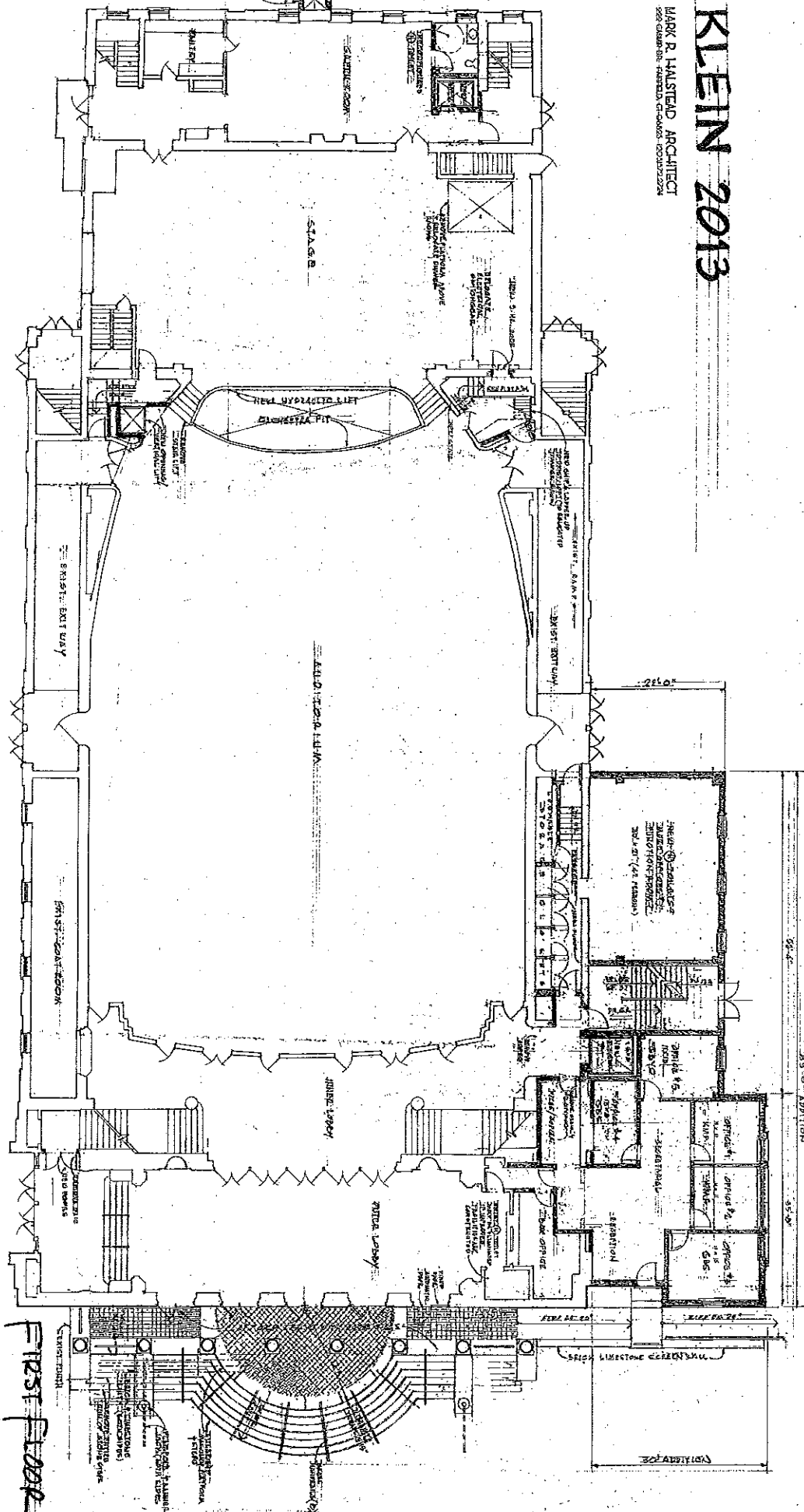
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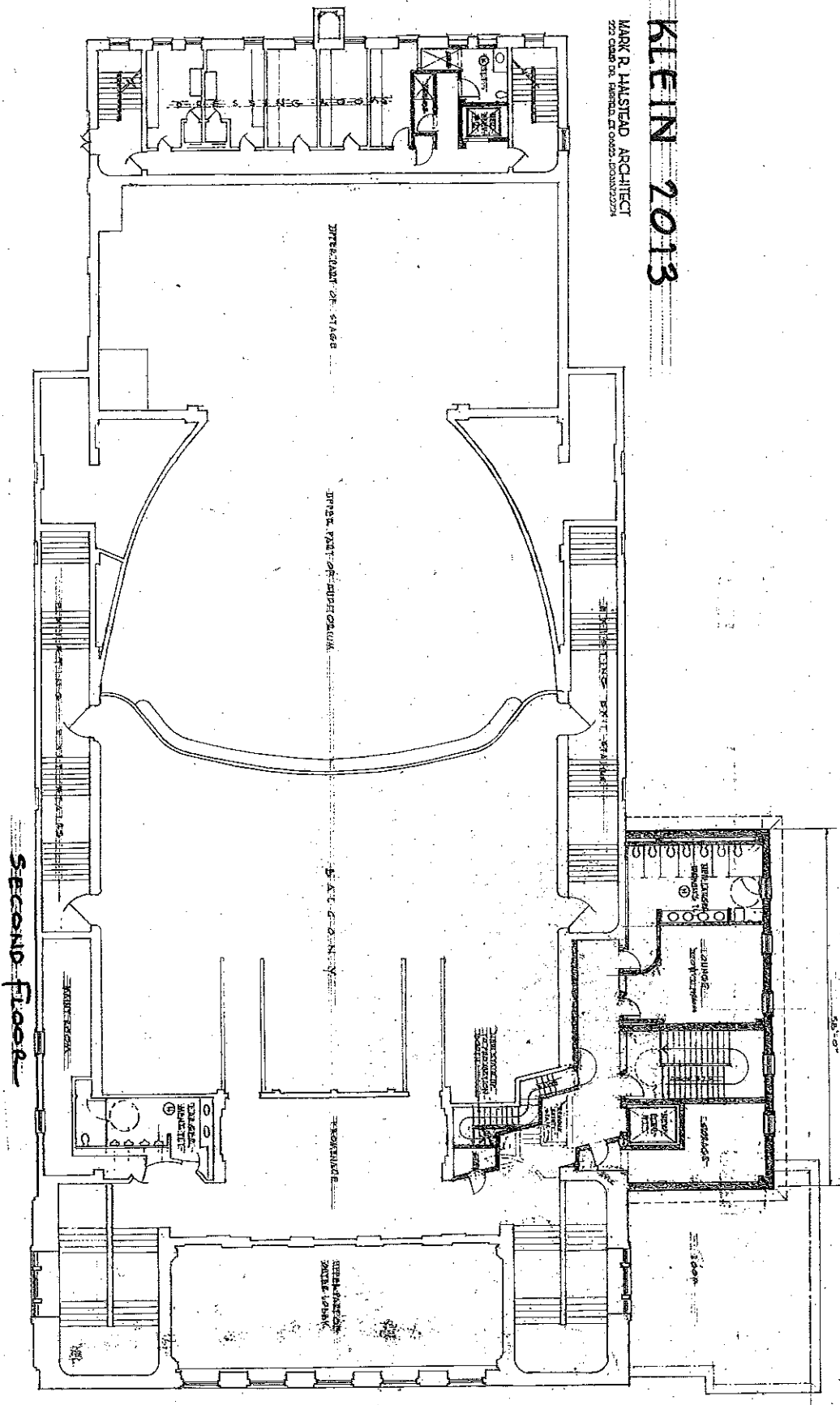
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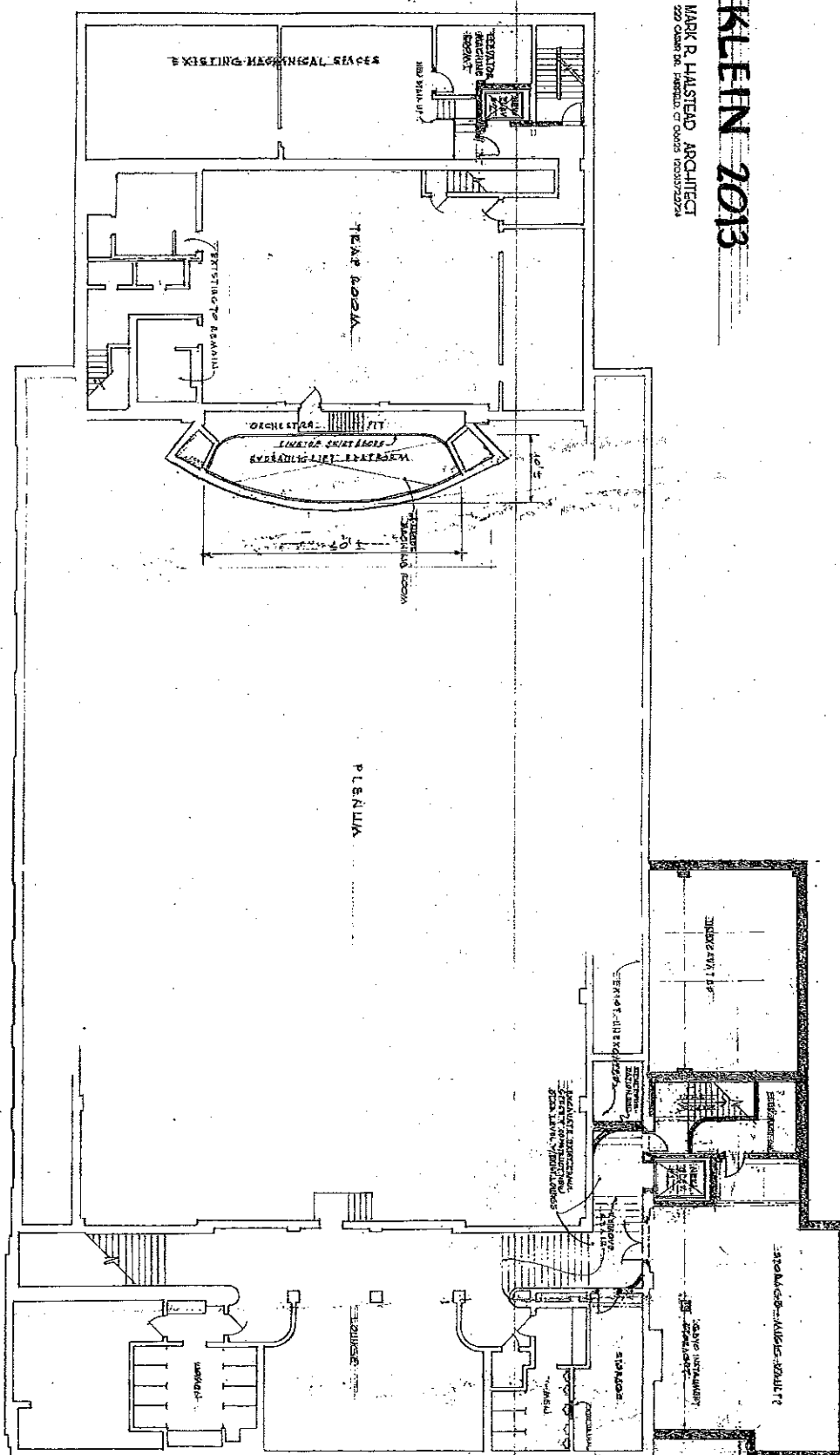


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BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

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Architectural drawing of the front elevation of the State Capitol building in Tallahassee, Florida. The drawing shows a long, symmetrical building with a central entrance and two wings. The wings feature large, arched windows and are topped with decorative cornices. The central entrance is flanked by columns and has a pedimented roof. A sign on the left side of the building reads "TALLAHASSEE".

